

I-DI-ADISM:TOWARDS AN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF AUTHENTIC EXISTENCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

It is pertinent that in the discourse concerning the African, the definition of who he is must start from him. Unlike the Cartesian methodic doubt where he goes through the process of thinking to assert an Existence, the African must define and assert himself and without doubts, in order to make out not just existence but an authentic existence for that matter. This kind of project has become necessary especially with the identity questions ever increasing and the crisis of relevance almost becoming a mainstay in the African conversation, across the globe. Every Philosophy is a product of an environment, an age and the contribution of a philosopher. African Philosophy like Olusegun Oladipo admonished must move beyond the question of what it is or if there is such a Philosophy to doing and practicing it. This itself asserts its existence, especially to those who view it from outside and doubtful of its sustainable veracity and operative condition. While other African Philosophers have interpreted a lot of African realities, there is still a missing gap of what it means to be an African: especially with being Black in a White World. Is the African actually black, brown, which? Who is White or who is black? Are these not mere nomenclatural constructs? Across the epochs and historicity of the African, the stakes are high that Africa remains the cradle of man and that civilization began along the Nile, where Egypt sits. For Africa to be actualized, it must first realize itself. The questions: Who is the African? What is in Africa? How ontologically self-aware is the African? These have become important and engaging questions in a changing World on the move. What is the African contribution to this change? Is he an onlooker or a participator? How developed is the African mentally, politically, religiously, economically, technologically and in all aspects of his reality? How can this be Sustainable? How can he rise like

the rest in the present milieu and dust himself of the chains tied around him. How can the African move towards Authentic Existence? These are the realities, the present currents in African Philosophy should address with profit and this present study summed this up with the conceptual framing of I di-adi. I di-adi is an Igbo word for to be; to exist. But any type of existence will not usher an Africa whose present potentials do not match with its credentials and vice-versa. The African Declaration is such that an Authentic Existence should bring about an Africa where the idea of mmadu (personhood) has enrobed dignified essence and both human and natural resources developed to the fullest in projecting Africa as the destination of the next man—technologically, philosophically, politically, religiously, culturally, in the process of history. The study engages the philosophic methods of hermeneutics, analysis and phenomenology to create a new paradigm in the crisis of identity and relevance in an ever-changing World, where the African is useful elsewhere but arguably in his homeland. I DI-ADISM is an African Philosophy of self-realization, through the path of assertion, contribution, authentication, in order to arrive at sustainable development and actualization. The idea of I di-adi would become that the African is, both in potentials and credentials, identifiable and relevant in the comity of human communities.

Keywords: Idi-adism, African Philosophy, Authentic Existence, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

A topic and article of this nature falls within the purview of African philosophy and Studies. Over the years, African philosophy has been a fertile ground for engaging Africa, its values, traditional systems, politics, strengths and weaknesses, possibilities in the now and future. Many have doubted the idea of African philosophy. Some others argue for its existence. They believe and argue that if there have been other philosophies in Western and Oriental parts of the World, then, Africa, reputed to be the cradle of man and of civilization cannot be secluded from philosophy, rationality and intellection. If there is man anywhere, civilization happens and community, culture and thought begin.

The contention in the now is no longer about the validity of an African philosophy but rather the engagements of pressing issues in the continent. African philosophy, for instance, began with the argument of its existence and the reclaiming of the 'Stolen Mandate.' At least, the work of Innocent Chilaka Onyenwuenyi (perhaps his *magnum opus*)—*The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*—was an *apologia* for the African continent. From political thoughts of Nkrumah, Sedar Senghor, Nyerere and Azikiwe, to the African notable philosophers like Hountondji, Wiredu, Oladipo, Sophie Oluwole, among

others, they have all shared their thoughts on the fruits, merits and validity of the African philosophic intellection and enterprise. African philosophy moved from reconstruction of African folklores, proverbs, belief system, magic, traditional and cultural patterns to the need to start doing it and treating other aspects of the African reality, especially the socio-political and socio-economic realities with profit in a world of emerging and changing trends. This was the position of Olusegun Oladipo with his *The Idea of African Philosophy*. This present study is in obeisance to the admonition of Oladipo. We see reasons with him. The existentialist movement generally is one that focused on human existence with its attendant condition. The pursuit of an authentic life is one of the core tenets of Existentialism.

Africa as a continent is not exempted from the pursuit of an authentic existence in a world of change. The pursuit of this authenticity would nip the crises of identity and relevance in the bud. Apart from the fact that Africa is the cradle of man and of civilization, how can continental Africa challenge and dust itself of the many external and internal chains on her way in the present milieu? Africa needs to contribute immensely to the world in the area of science and technology. Mbiti has described the average African as notoriously religious. Being religious is not bad in itself. Religion is an important aspect of the human phenomena or realities. However, being religious is not enough for the African. He has to balance his religion with education, growth, development and progress. This is how he can become better and authenticated.

Economically, Africa despite the huge potentials and natural resources at her disposal, continues to suffer underdevelopment, exploitation from within and outside. From within, the political class embezzle the treasury and mismanage the resources. They impoverish their country men and women at the expense of national development and an egalitarian society built on values, enterprise and reward for hard work. Externally, Africa's raw materials are sold or forcefully carted away, produced and resold to Africa. Africa has the largest market for most European, American and Asian products, while Africa's products struggle to find a market in these places, except for Africans who sell to their country men and women over there, especially the food materials. This is the sorry story of Africa. Taking Nigeria as an example, none of Nigeria's four refineries are working. Nigeria still imports oil. Stockfish, otherwise, known as okporoko in Igbo or panla in Yoruba is being largely imported from Norway. How can Africa's local industries grow to a level the World needs more of Africa's products, instead of the scramble for her raw materials? These are some of the issues this paper seeks to address.

The idea of *I di-adi* is an Igbo nomenclature signifying existence or to be. This study will treat it in the subsequent sub-theme. The overall goal of this paper is to drive and stimulate an intellectual revolution for the African continent in pushing for continental authentication in individual/collective/communal life, society, governance and public affairs, in order to awaken the desire for continental-realization needed for continental-actualization.

I-Di-Adi: Conceptual Clarification and Delineation

I di-adi is an Igbo word for existence. *I di* means either one is or to be, depending on the intonation or how it was pronounced or used in a sentence. *Adi* also means to be. It means having an existence. *Adim* means I am. *Gi* or *I di*, means you are. *Ha di*, means they are. *Anyi di*, means, we are. *O di*, means it is. *Ga-adi* means it will or shall be. *Di* means it is. Although, it can also refer to husband, depending on usage, because it is same spelling. All these aspects are summed up in *I di-adi*, which is to be. It is metaphysical and ontological.

The African continent has its notion of existence. Existence, for the African is a summation of the life-process. To exist in Africa is existing as a “being-with-others.” It is never in isolation. Man, it is viewed to be part of nature. Nature has a high tide in the African metaphysical conversation. The African, without prejudice, reverences nature. In nature, God is found, life is grasped and meaning revealed. Anything, not natural is ontologically un-African. For the African, existence implies spiritual and physical components. Nature is only a physical manifestation of what the spiritual entails. Existence for the African remains a spiritual component made manifest in the physical. It carries with it a moral responsibility, in order to fit into the communal life of the community.

Corroborating this, C.B. Okolo noted that: “Being-with” is a characteristic of the African mode-of-being-in-the-world means also openness to nature in positive and sacred relationship¹ For the African person, nature is sacred and mystifying. The African seeks harmony with it by sharing in its life, its spiritual and material blessings... the task of man is however to exploit nature and to the full, too² Hence, A. Ugwu noted that Man is, therefore, a being whose existence is defined as ontologically interrelational.³

According to Akinola, African Conception of the nature of man is influenced by African worldview and understanding of human existence. Man in many African societies is perceived as instinctively spiritual, communal, deterministic, both emotional and rational.⁴

When we talk about Existence as epitomized by the Igbo word *I-di-adi*, it portrays Existentialism. The difference though is not in the individual as envisaged by Western philosophy. African has its own mode of existence. Existence in African perspective is made meaningful in “shared-ness.” It is more of “we” than “I.” Existence is emotional and married to culture and the community. From here, the idea of communalism springs. However, there is the part of Existentialism, in a generic sense that should affect and concern the African. It is in the area of freedom and authentic life. That is, pulling off shackles and limitations to determine what one wants and the type of life envisaged. Overcoming fear, dread, anxiety, forlornness, angst, in determining to exist, which comes by realizing and actualizing.

It is at the heart of this, that the idea of *I-di-adi* emanates and would hold intellectual water. While the African is communalistic in nature, therein lies his strength to achieve great things. The idea of *Igwebuike*—strength in collectiveness—has been severally espoused by Prof. Kanu. Each unique existential component, in this sense, the human person, combines to utilize their uniqueness in pulling something powerful. This is what the African needs.

According to Kanu, ‘To be’ in Igbo ontology is *idi*. The operative word in *Idi* (to be) is *di* (be), and it comes from the word *odi* (it is), which is the third person of the singular *idi*. It means ‘to exist’ or ‘to be’. It is an adjective and can be suffixed to anything to show that it exists. For instance, Okwute *di* (stone exists), Nkita *di* (dog exists), Kanu *di* (Kanu exists), Uwa *di* (the world exists).⁵

Again, in the words of Kanu:

The expression, *Igwebuike*, is a combination of three Igbo words. It can be understood as a word or a sentence: as a word, it is written as *Igwebuike*, and as a sentence, it is written as, *Igwe bu ike*, with the component words enjoying some independence in terms of space. Literally, *Igwe* is a noun which means number or multitude, usually a large number or population. The number or population in perspective are entities with ontological identities and significances; however, it is part of an existential order in which every entity is in relation to the other. *Bu* is a verb, which means *is*. *Ike* is a noun, which means strength or power. *Igwe*, *bu* and *Ike* put together, means ‘number is strength’ or ‘number is power.’ However, beyond the literal sense of *Igwebuike*, it means *otu obi* (one heart and one soul) – *cor unum et anima una*.⁶

Sharing further on this communitarian stance, as regard existence in Africa, Ugwu, Ozoemena and Ngwoke noted that:

African worldview has always been perceived in terms of the other“. Existence is existence-in-and-among-and-with-others-in-and-within-communities. No being is existentially conceived in isolation from the other; and drawing from that, existential quiddity is enshrined in the community where every member-being lives and fulfil its destiny and aspirations. Thus, the value and essence of community places a high influence on the African experience; hence, the position that communality best describes the African personality. This „communality-phenomenon“ has been designated with some terms by some African scholars like Senghor and his „Negritude, Nyerere and his Ujamaa“, Nkrumah and his Consciencism“, Azikiwe and his Eclecticism“, Mbiti and his I-and-We Existential mantra“, Okolo and his Being-with“, Asouzu and his Ibuanyidanda-Complimentarity“, Ozumba and Chimakonam and their Njikoka-Amaka Integrative-Humanism,“ Nze and his Communalistic-Brotherhood“, Edeh and his EPTAISM of Mma-di-in-Closeness-not-Closedness.⁷

Like Akinola noted, the beginning point of any discussion about human existence in Africa is the origin of man. Unlike the Western existentialism that pay no attention to man's origin, it is an important part of African existentialism. In Africa, man is a product of something and did not just drop from somewhere. The Pre-existence of man has direct relationship with his practical existence. This African perspective can also not be separated from their belief in God. God to many African people is supreme, stable, reliable and dependable and the creator of man and the universe. He is the creator and the sustainer of the universe and everything therein including humanity⁸

However, the foregone analyses portray the idea of being—what it means to be and exist in Africa. Unlike Western Existentialism, the African is not in isolation. He is a being towards others with an “*Ubuntu*” disposition. The idea of *Ubuntu*—an African universalistic philosophy of sharing, human connectivity and bond—is the fulcrum of the African idea or gateway to reality, especially as it concerns human existence and relationship. While it is true that there is a dichotomy between African and Western existentialist discourse, there is a connection especially in relation to human freedom and authenticity. In the course of this study, it shall be treated. Summarily, the concept of *I di-adi*, apart from the exposition of what being is in Africa, carries a slightly different meaning in conveying contemporary construct of what it means to be or exist in Africa, as of today. The idea of *I-di-adi* for today's Africa is not just to exist but to exist with all freedom and authenticity. Pulling off from age long traditions, cultural limitations, external and neo-colonial influences that no longer serve the contemporary African, going forward. It is not enough that it is often perceived that the African is a being with others. In the same regard, it can be like other developed parts of the World. It should not be in isolation in poverty, sickness and disease, malnourishment, backwardness, underdevelopment, dearth in science and technological know-how and epistemic groundings, poor politically and a non-liberal democracy. This is not how the contemporary African can be. *I di-Adi* is an affirmation, a declaration, a revolution, a mindset shift, a progressive thinking and approach towards betterment and egalitarian/just society in Africa. The idea of *I-di-adi* is a process of history and the next man, who would be an African ruling the world. This is possible. Simply put, *I-di-adi* is a revolutionary and reactionary African Philosophy of change, geared towards curbing the problems of identity, relevance, backwardness and underdevelopment for the African people. Africans' existence would be made meaningful when they rise up to confront their socio-political challenges and contribute in a World, where for the most part, they often look like Spectators, and following Fanon, looking truly like the 'Wretched of the Earth.'

Who is an African? Debate and Designation.

It is important to treat this theme because of the way the African is often described, which points to a problem. The general perception of the African is a backward and underdeveloped person, who is inferior and lacks a thinking faculty. He is seen as full of emotions and highly superstitious. Often times, when fellow African wants to denigrate

themselves, especially Africans who feel they have attained some exposures and travelled to different parts of the World, they call their fellow Africans: *ndi ishi oji*. It is an Igbo word meaning black headed people . Referring to people who do things bizarrely, without reason and anything goes. Again, there are questions begging answers, which for long time, there is the lack of willpower to interrogate. Is the African actually black? Black as in the literal sense of black? However, we have come to see that it is a racialized way of classifying people from African and others elsewhere sharing same skin colour. The argument is that the black coloration tag is from the dark hair of Africans. Some see nothing wrong with it, especially as it helps to group a particular class of people with same skin colour. In that case, it is arguable that not everyone in African continent would pass as black? Would Africans of the Maghreb be called Arab Africans? That is those in Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya. If so, how then can we say Africans are part and core of the black race? This is part of the crises of identity, Africa suffers today.

There are those who believe that using the term black was derogatory or reductivist or should one say racial reductivism. M. Levinson noted that some perceive the term "black" as a derogatory, outdated, reductive or otherwise unrepresentative label, and as a result neither use nor define it, especially in African countries with little to no history of colonial racial segregation⁹

Contemporary anthropologists and other scientists, while recognizing the reality of biological variation between different human populations, regard the concept of a unified, distinguishable "Black race" as socially constructed. Different societies apply different criteria regarding who is classified "black", and these social constructs have changed over time. In a number of countries, societal variables affect classification as much as skin color, and the social criteria for "blackness" vary. In the United Kingdom, "black" was historically equivalent with "person of color", a general term for non-European peoples. In other regions such as Australasia, settlers applied the term "black" or it was used by local populations with different histories and ancestral backgrounds.¹⁰

This also creates further problem. If as the foregoing stated or read that non-Europeans are referred to as persons of colour, what colour then are the Europeans? If they are humans, then, they cannot be secluded from racial coloration. The funny thing though is that these classifications often come from Europeans, not helped by exploration, later conquest and slavery, follow-up colonialism and a continuous neo-colonial disposition of perpetuating control over others—all pointing to delusions of grandeur and racial chauvinism. Others cannot be people of colour while they are not. It is a contradiction and against the law of thought.

It is in things like this, that the idea of *I-di-Adi* emanates. Africans need to truly rise and exist. The civilization of Egypt that heralded as the first civilization in known history made Africa once a beacon of light for the human race. There is need to intellectually return, to

reclaim such a rich past, even if in the present, scholars argue that such a civilization was primitive and esoteric and has been improved upon. But the refusal to acknowledge the origin remains what Africa is being denied of thousands of centuries after. The Mystery systems in Egypt and all the recorded facts that many of the Greek philosophers studied in Egypt attest to the fact that Africa lost track in the process of history and even so, lost identity and designation, which resulted in resignation. Africa for no reason ought not to be where it is now. It ought not to have any business with poverty or the underdevelopment tag. Africa has all the potentials to have advanced in all facets of existential and cosmologic reality. Although, it is clear, it has an unpleasant history which affected a lot of things.

Despite all these, the question remains: who is an African? Africans are people who are native to Africa and can trace their ancestry or lineage to it. It is often understood as someone who comes from Africa or is born in it, so long as there is rooted connection to the community, the person is from.

J. Adibe corroborates this sentiment, when he noted that:

At face value, the answer to this question seems obvious. Surely, everyone knows who the African is, it would seem. But the answer becomes less obvious once other probing qualifiers are added to the question. Are White South Africans really Africans? Are Moroccans, Egyptians and other Arab Africans as much Africans as say, Nigerians or Ghanaians? Is Barrack Obama an African? Do all categorized as African or as having an African pedigree perceive themselves as such? Are all who perceive themselves as Africans accepted as such? Are there levels of “African-ness”, and are some more African than others? Who allots this African-ness, and why? How does African identity interface with other levels of identity and citizenship in Africa? In short, how is the African identity constructed in the face of the mosaic of identities that people of African ancestry living within and beyond the continent bear. For some, the African is simply a racial category - a Black man with certain Bantu features.¹¹

Adibe further noted:

Again if we use race alone in the delineation of the African, a legitimate question is raised about non-Blacks with African citizenship, say, the White South Africans, who never knew any other country but South Africa. Are they Africans? Some have tried to use territoriality to define the African. For those who adopt this perspective, all it takes will be to look at the map of the world and categorize all who were born in the continent of Africa or who hold the citizenship of one of the countries that make up the continent, or has ancestry in the continent, as African. This option however has equally a number of problems. For example, if we choose to call all who have ‘African’ ancestry Africans, how far back in time should we go? This perspective also wrongly assumes that all who are citizens of the countries that make up the continent of Africa accept that they are ‘Africans’. Even within sub-Saharan

Africa, sections of countries like Somalia, Mauritania, Niger and Sudan would prefer to be called Arabs, not Africans.¹²

Citing another parameter through which one can claim to be an African, Adibe again notes that:

There are also those who believe that consciousness of being an African, or commitment to the cause of Africa should be the only or main criterion for delineating who the African is. This form of classification is quite popular with the remnants of the African ideological left and those eager to wear the toga of universalism and cosmopolitanism. One of the weaknesses of this classificatory scheme however is that it is so fluid that any one expressing any sort of interest in African affairs could, by this definition, legitimately claim to be an African.¹³

Eminent African political scientist Professor Ali Mazrui made a distinction between “Africans of the blood and Africans of the soil”. For him, Africans of the blood are defined in racial and genealogical terms. They are identified with the black race while Africans of the soil are defined in geographical terms. For Mazrui therefore, both territoriality and race should be used simultaneously in identifying the African. A major problem with this view however is that it seems to imply a hierarchy of Africans since someone who is both an African of the blood and an African of the soil could legitimately claim a higher ranking than those who have fewer attributes such as those who are only Africans of the soil or of the blood.¹⁴

In this context of this study, an African is someone born in Africa or has African roots even when not in Africa but shares a negritudinal identity. It is important to emphasize on the insistence on Negritude. Negritude involves the affirmation and consciousness of the value of African cultural identity. It is in taking pride in African cultural heritage without feeling shame. Without wanting to be another. According to E.M Ome, Negritude constituted a dream and above all a philosophy of action for the black people as a race of discriminated and exploited humanity. Negritude contained in its vision a new African personality, African world-view, and a path to authentic black existence.¹⁵ To be in Africa is not just any form of existence but an existence that would be counted as revolutionary, progressive, developmental, ideated and having all positive attributes necessary for the actualization of the African potentials. It is a project that must begin and be completed. Anyone who shows genuine commitment to it has Africa at heart. Africa is a continent of promise. It only needs introspection in order to find solution to its myriads of problems.

The Problems of Africa and Implications for Sustainable Development

Africa is a continent blessed with rich human and natural resources. This is not in doubt. Apart from its historical composition as the cradle of man and the *primus*, in terms of civilization, Africa has everything to suggest that it is a blessed continent. The problems of Africa apart from slavery, colonialism and the argument that Europe underdeveloped Africa,

among others, contemporary Africa is case of Africans underdeveloping Africa. Chief among Africa's problems is the problem of mindset. The way most Africans think has long term consequences in relation to sustainable development. Explanations suffice: An African leader goes to developed places and sees how things are done there but would struggle to replicate such in his home country. The wealthy African is interested in widening the gap between the rich and poor in his society. The wealthy African thinks if other Africans become wealthy, he cannot be able to lord it or exert his control over them. This same mindset is utilized in establishing a business or running an establishment in Africa with a killing capitalist tendency. Workers are paid peanuts and the working conditions poor while the organization amasses profit upon profit. People cannot boast of decent living. In Nigeria, for instance, instead of Nigerians to question why there is no steady electricity despite the billions spent on electricity, over the years, it was hardly an issue. Instead a generator set was nicknamed "I better pass my neighbour." Again, the problem of mindset suffices in Education and Religion. Education became reduced to nothing that in Africa today, with Nigeria as an example, Education is being viewed as a scam. Fraud, questionable source of wealth, unaccountability in public offices, lack of values, among other vices are promoted today above intellectual and cognitive abilities. Religion, today in Africa, is being used as a tool to manipulate. It has also been monetized. The essence of religion which is to help man form a personal relationship with God imbued with moral rectitude is missing and almost extinct. Government and stakeholders on their part use religion to fuel a political agenda. Another mindset issue of the African is the inability to have a clean environment. This is summed up in the slogan: "dirty no dey kill African man." The slogan portrays that the African is so accustomed to dirt that it has become part of him. The consequences of this are that we do not see clean cities in Africa, channels built for water to flow during rainy season are blocked. Dirts are dumped in non-designated places. This problem follows also to public infrastructures which are messed up, destroyed and hardly maintained because of this culture of not good in keeping things tidy and neat. As minute as these things, when development is being talked about, these are the things that add up to say that a country is developed or not or that a country is cultured or not or a tourist destination or not. Another mindset problem is that most Africans beginning with the leaders are not futuristic and hardly plan ahead. They are myopic and hardly patriotic. When something is discovered, what quickly comes to mind is to share the proceeds from it without processing it to see how many ways, it could serve the country and for how long. Without the thinking of what good, it can bring into the country. Africans and their leaders, it is arguable or it seems, mostly think of amassing wealth and looting. It is a poor mindset!

Another major problem of Africa is leadership crisis. In fact, it is the root of all other problems. Contemporary Africa, for the most part, lacks visionary leadership. This is why many things go wrong and underdevelopment remains a mainstay. This bad leadership crisis makes most African leaders cling to power and the sit-tight syndrome being witnessed. In the past was military take-overs which were undemocratic. Now, democracy has almost come to stay in most African countries, even though not liberal but bad leadership remains.

Most elections conducted are usually not credible. The recent concluded elections in Nigeria point to this fact. Africa cannot attain sustainable development with bad leadership crisis. It has remain a teething problem for long.

Another factor is corruption. Corruption like poison kills a nation. Most African countries continue to experience corruption on large scale. The issue though is that, realistically speaking, there is corruption in other continents of the World. There is corruption in America and Europe but there is still a wide gap to it. Corruption in Europe or America will not bring about bad roads or bring about a non-functional health system, poor educational system or dilapidated public infrastructures. But corruption in Africa can bring about all these. This is really where the problem lies. Corruption in Africa literally kills. The chief cause of contemporary Africa's underdevelopment is bad leadership married to corruption. They go hand in hand like lovers in bed.

Religious Conflict and ethnicism are two other problems. The religious conflict come from either manipulation or misdirection. Religious leaders aid religious crisis sometimes through their utterances and politicians manipulate religion for their selfish gains. Misdirection or wrong use of religion comes from not being educated. An Educated person cannot be manipulated. They are so intellectually saturated that all they seek out is nothing but truth. The truth in things and pragmatic cum utilitarian consequences of reality.

Today in Africa still, another teething problem is the problem of brain drain and lack of opportunities for personal growth which can bring about human capital development. Whether we agree to this or not, there cannot be sustainable development without human capital development. It is first step to securing and achieving sustainable development. Hence, advanced countries of the World build up their educational system to enviable heights and do everything through funding and innovative ideas, to sustain it. Little wonder, Universities in Europe and America, and now Asia, have become some of the top academic destinations in the World. The problems of brain drain and lack of opportunities continue to increase by the day. As of today, brain drain is a bane to Africa's developmental potentials. According to the African Union, about 70,000 skilled professionals emigrate from Africa every year. Currently, Africa is the world's youngest continent, with an estimated 10 to 12 million young Africans joining the labour force each year. Yet the continent is able to create only about 3 million jobs annually.¹⁶

Most countries in Europe and North America continue to come out with immigration policies that attract others from other parts of the World, Africa especially. A visionary leadership in Africa can reduce the problem of Brain Drain. However, it must begin with a credible election that produces credible candidates.

An important problem in Africa we often do not talk about or turn blind eyes to are traditions and cultures that impede growth and progress in Africa. While we will agree that

cultures differ and every culture must not be the same, for the sake of growth, Africa must overcome some cultural patterns. Take for instance, burial rites and the amounts expended to bury the dead. They say it is culture but go to Europe and America to see the simplicity of burials and other ceremonies. The monetization of Age grades, Town Unions and other Cultural Associations in Africa can sometimes become too exorbitant and no longer portray what they ought to represent or the reason for their establishment. People pay through their nose, in order to belong. This is not right and against the feeling of *Espirit de corp*. This kills the feeling of pride and loyalty to a group one belongs, because it is against humanism.

The problems of Africa are manifold but these ones mentioned at least, point to the fact that if these ones are solved, Africa's teething socio-political problems, would have been reduced by half.

Africa: Towards the Path of Authentic Existence

Two key factors in the existentialist current especially the Existentialism of Kierkegaard and Sartre is in freedom and authenticity. While the slogan of 'anonymous mass of they' may have some contradiction when applied to Africa, because of the community-ness of Africa cultural life, the ideas of freedom and authentication are important for Africa, especially in dusting itself of the many chains holding it down from actualizing its huge potentials.

When we look at the African story: its past, present, there is need to reconstruct a future we would want to see. Africa's past is one of mixed feelings. At the Western front, it is argued that Africa was barbaric, backward and a continent in darkness. Then, came the Europeans who brought light, civilization and exposure to Africa and had to colonize it indirectly or via assimilation to bring it up to civility and modernity. However, no one talks about the exploitation, the slavery, the take-over of people's lands and resources, the dehumanization and denial of what is rightly for Africans. It is not an exaggeration that Europe underdeveloped Africa, even though contemporary Africans are also underdeveloping Africa. The colonization and domination which have ever remained so point to the fact that Africa would continue to play second fiddle, if it refuses to develop. Despite the independence of African countries, they are still nowhere in terms of development. If we take away North-Africa and South Africa, we will see that the rest of Africa is still struggling to be called developed. The problem, like already noted, is not for lack of resources but for lack of visionary leadership in changing the status-quo for good.

How can Africa attain the path of Authentication? How can Africa be free from all western domination? The Chinese and Arabs have started a revolution. Take the example of football, how many Chinese players or Arab players play in Europe? The entire number of Asian players who have played in Europe can be counted. On the contrary Asian Leagues like the Saudi Pro League have become a place that attract established soccer players. Only recently

Cristiano Ronaldo, Benzema, Ngolo Kante, among others, currently ply their trade there. This shows that a revolution is ongoing in the area of Sports there.

Africa hardly attracts such big names. Most African leagues apart from those in North Africa and South Africa, remains unattractive. The key issue though is how can Africa become the next destination, in sports, science and technology, in terms of development, among others. This is the chief purpose of this paper. The primary task is to fight poverty. Poor people only think of survival. Wealthy people thinking of growth and diversification. They think investment and multiplication.

Today, Africa has become a dumping site for most contraband goods in Europe. Raw materials are carted away from Africa, manufactured and resold to Africa. Most African countries, with Nigeria as an example continues to suffer currency devaluation partly because they borrow to consume and produce almost nothing to export. Another thing is excessive importation into African countries, which further place value on the currency used to import. Africa is last in terms of the global scheme of things. But a cursory look at Africans shows that they are among the most intelligent people in the World. Some of the recent discoveries in the World were done by Africans. However, they are Africans in foreign developed countries, where they had the opportunity to develop and to do wonders. Where they had the enabling environment. This is at the heart of what fuels brain drain in Africa. The whole of the French National team that won the World Cup in 2018 in Russia were 70% of African origin. From Mbappe to Pogba to Kante, among others, these are all people of African ancestry.

At the global level, Africa is usually derided. When George Opong Weah won the FIFA World Player of the Year and Balon D'or in 1995, he said won those amidst years of suffering from racism. He noted that the *La Gazetta dello Sports* ran a headline: "And Oh, the black wins the Golden Ball!" Even in his team of Milan, he was asked if he sold it to buy bread for those in Africa. This is mockery! It shows that nothing done by Africans is often recognized. There is the pity feeling or sentiment, once it is an African.

But Africans are to be blamed and this is why there is need to pursue the path of authentication. How can this happen? It can happen by Africans primarily correcting their mindset and thinking independence in everything they do. This is part of the decolonization agenda. For instance, in Nigeria, most names of places were adulterated by the colonial Master and till date, no Nigeria leader has thought it wise to correct those names. For instance, Awka in Anambra State is originally Oka. Onitsha is Onu-icha. Owerri is Owerre or Owerela. Awkuzu is Oka-uzu. Enugu is Enu-ugwu. In Delta State, Ibusa is Ibu-uzo or Igbo-uzo. Usiefrun is Urhiephron. Warri is Eware. These names were adulterated and have never been reversed post-independence. It shows that the African reality is often defined from outside and Africans become more or less people who are incapable of defining their reality.

The path of authentic existence for the African would be hinged on the deepest construal of what it means to have authentic existence. An authentic existence is rooted in freedom. Development is freedom. To be free is to be developed. Authentic Existence is rooted in self-awareness. It is in defining reality in one's own terms. It is in the thinking of original ideas that can serve the World. It is in the hard work to see that Africa is regarded across the globe. This can practically be done by African leaders fighting poverty, creating access to opportunities in the home front, which invariably reduces brain drain. The truth remains that for as long as thousands of Africans migrate to developed countries of the World annually, Africa can never be regarded. African leaders need to stop the culture of borrowing from international financial institutions. If they plan well and become domestically prudent and productive, there would be products to export, which reduces the import deficit and the continuous devaluation of currencies of some African countries. Part of the development agenda should be to run a knowledge economy. Africa will do better from there. The globe today is running on a knowledge economy. Science and technology have advanced. There are now electric cars. The World is ruthlessly advancing in the area of technology. Today, we are in the conversation for necrobotics, this is turning dead bodies to robots, 3D printed bones and foods, natural language processing, Boom free supersonic flight, digital twins that track one's health, direct air capture necessary to turn carbon dioxide to synthetic fuels, energy storing bricks, sand batteries, car batteries that charges in 10 minutes, brain reading robots, artificial neurons on silicon chips¹⁷ and a host of others. Indeed, the World is on a fast lane!

The question becomes: how can Africa be relevant in the scheme of things. How can Africa contribute? Admittedly, Africans in Europe and America have done well in the area of Academics, science and technology but the glory goes to these countries who see these Africans as their adopted own or their products. However, this is not what continental Africa needs to attain sustainable development. Africa, in times past is known for some technological know-how. How can this past be replayed? The Sphinx of Giza, the pyramids in Egypt, the Goldsmith at Oka (Awka), Anambra, Nigeria show that the African is not bereft of ideas, given the right conditions. It is this right conditions that Africans must fight and ensure they have visionary leaders who can bring about this authentic existence and development. The idea of *I-di-adi* is for the African to exist authentically, with sense of wellness and freedom in a World on the move. Africa must contribute its quota to changing the World. This is possible if African leaders start doing the right things by developing Africa with all sense of Afrocentrism and to make Africa, one of the most vaunted continents in the near future. A continent that is epistemically grounded (knowledge economy) and African traditional knowledge converted to suit the postmodern World.

Conclusion

So far, in this paper, there has been the emphasis for an authentic existence of the African continent rooted in freedom and a progressive mindset to things. Africa needs to dust itself

of whatever holds it down in relation to underdevelopment, poverty, backwardness, a non-functional system. African needs workable institutions to realize and actualize its massive potentials.

I di-adi is an African philosophy of understanding what it means to exist as an African. To exist as an African is to align with nature, have the deepest understanding of things, utilize and convert the forces of the universe to the African good. It means taking advantage of the African qualities—raw energy(stamina, strength, endurance), rich social life, communal life, religious leaning, respect for elders, dedication to hard work, love for truth and being a brother's keeper, among others. When these are converted, it would imply using the unity and bond available from social and communal life, to labour for a society rooted in moral rectitude and justice that could lead to transformation in improving the lot of such a society. Africa needs to rise up and stop playing second fiddle to the World. It needs to contribute. The World should not always milk Africa. Africa should give the World something that can make it ever dependent on Africa, without compromising its freedom. There is nothing incomplete about the Africa in terms of being a normal human being. It is only that the mess in his environment limits his potential and ingrains in him a feeling of inferiority complex to think that others: Europeans, Americans, Asians have better ability than him and that he cannot transform his environment to look like those of other countries. Authentic Existence in Africa as conceptually framed in the idea of *I-di-adi* can set up the template that can help Africa become the next destination, politically, economically, scientifically and technologically. Proactive citizens that can enthrone visionary leadership is all that is needed to take Africa from where it is to the next level. Conclusively, as far as contemporary African philosophy can interrogate, the idea of *I-di-adi* is envisioning an Authentic existence that could lead to sustainable all-round development in Africa.

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